

# Burr Oak Woods

Conservation Nature Center Newsletter

The **Nutshell** ~ March 2010

## The Dance of Spring

"Shhh! Can you hear that?" The small group stops and listens. We look around silently. "There it is again," I whisper. "Peent!" He states emphatically, announcing his appearance to all. We slowly drop to the ground, listening intently. I glance at the children in our group. Their eyes are open wide, anticipating, scanning the sky. We hear it again and again, first near, then far. He is circling, announcing his presence to every female in the vicinity. There he is! A chunky little bird flies just in front of our group. "Peent!" he insists. We hear the twittering of his wings as he flies by. Suddenly, he launches skyward, gaining height, circles becoming ever wider. He ascends nearly 300 feet above our heads. Then just as suddenly, he begins to free-fall toward earth once again. He resembles a leaf wafting back and forth on a gentle breeze. Just before he plummets into the ground near the same place he began his wonderful dance, he begins to peent again in earnest, and once again ascends toward the sky. He repeats this dance over and over until darkness settles.

This sure sign of spring has enthralled those fortunate enough to witness it for decades. This is the dance of the American Woodcock. These birds begin to arrive in Missouri as early as late February. The woodcock is considered to be a member of

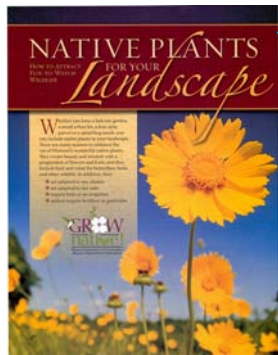
the shorebird family, interesting enough, because they prefer moist woodlands. Their coloration keeps them completely camouflaged amongst the leaf litter of the forest floor. So one rarely sees a woodcock, except during the spring when they begin their dance in search of a choice female. This bird has a rather odd appearance with its rotund little body and short, squat, but powerful wings. Woodcocks have long, slender, prehensile beaks. The tip of their beak moves independently from the rest, allowing for it to search for and seize their meal of choice, earthworms! The woodcock uses its large eyes positioned high on top their heads to navigate, and give them a wide field of view, allowing them to search for earthworms and be on the lookout for predators at the same time.

If your family would like to witness this spectacular dance of spring, find an open area near a moist woodland and find a comfortable seat just before sunset. Remain silent and be patient. If you listen carefully, you may hear his tell-tale nasal peent. If you are lucky he will soon circle skyward. Sit back and enjoy the magic of his show! At last! Spring has arrived!

Lisa LaCombe  
Nature Center Manager



6 Saturday 1:00 – 3:30p  
Native Plant Sale  
All Ages  
See details in program listing



**FREE** Native Plants for Your Landscape  
leaflet

Whether you have a balcony garden, small urban lot, a four-acre parcel or a sprawling ranch, you can include native plants in your landscape. This free publication covers topics on how to get started, sample landscape plans, plant recommendations for both sun and shade areas, and landscape-friendly grasses and sedges.

## Programs presented in March on The American Woodcock

13 Saturday Noon – 3:00p  
Naturalist on Call: American Woodcocks  
All ages

\*Naturalist on Call is an informal program set up for the casual visitor and family to stop and learn about a specific species spending as little or as much time as they have with a Naturalist.

13 Saturday 6:00 – 7:30p  
Discover Nature Families: Woodcock Hike  
Families with children 5 & up

\*Discover Nature Families programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together.

See details on the above programs on the program pages.

**Helping Missourians connect with nature and conserve it, too!**

# March Programs

Please call 816-228-3766 on or after **Tuesday, March 2, 2010** to register for the free programs listed. It is important to arrive five minutes before the program time. If you have to cancel, please call as soon as possible, so someone on the waiting list can attend.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE #1**

**NEW!** HOURS OF OPERATION  
Starting MARCH 1, 2010

### **Conservation Area (trails)**

Central Standard Time ~ 7:00a - 6:00p

Daylight Savings Time ~ 7:00a - 8:00p

### **Nature Center ~ Year Round**

Tuesday - Friday ~ 7:00a - 6:00p

Saturday ~ 8:00a - 5:00p

Sunday - Monday ~ **CLOSED**

**closed New Year Day, Thanksgiving,  
the Friday following Thanksgiving, and Christmas**

**4 Thursday 1:00 – 3:00p**

***The Lost Art of Maple Sugaring***

**Adults 18 & up**

The days are becoming warmer and the nights are still cold. This will make the sap of maple trees flow. Join us as we learn how to tap trees, collect sap, and make delicious syrup from tree sap and berries. Please call to register.

**6 Saturday 8:00 – Noon**

***NatureScaping Workshop***

**Adults 18 & up**

In hard economic times, we are all ears when someone is sharing a way to save us both money and time. Attending our NatureScaping Workshop is a sure way to learn how to conserve both. Learn specifics about native plantings that can enhance your property's value. Registration began Friday, February 19, 2010, please call for current availability.

Session Topics:

Grow Your Own Seedlings

Planning a Native Garden

Debugging Your Garden

Wild Edible Landscape

Growing Urban Trees

Organic Lawn & Garden Care

Native Plant Sale Purchases for Participants ~ Noon - 1:00p



**6 Saturday 1:00 – 3:30p**

***Native Plant Sale***

**All Ages**

Now is an ideal time to plant hardy native wildflowers. Merv Wallace from Missouri Wildflowers Nursery will be here with native plants available for sale (while supplies last). We will have helpful advice on choosing the best plants for the soil and sunlight conditions of your planting site. No registration is required; walk-ins are welcome.

**9 Tuesday 6:30 – 8:00p**

***Tree Selection & Planting***

**Adults 18 & up**

Spring is a wonderful time to plant trees in your landscape. Come learn what species do well in our area and how to plant them to ensure survival. Urban Forester Chuck Conner will discuss all aspects of planting and caring for new landscape trees. Please call to register.



**13 Saturday Noon – 3:00p**

***Naturalist on Call: American Woodcocks***

**All ages**

\*Naturalist on Call is an informal program set up for the casual visitor and family to stop and learn about a specific species spending as little or as much time as they have with a Naturalist. Stop out and learn about the elusive bird we call timberdoodles or woodcocks. They are a sure sign that spring is coming. Their camouflage and preferred habitat makes it difficult even for the avid birder to find. No registration is required; walk-ins are welcome.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE #2**

Daylight Savings Time Begins

**Sunday, March 14, 2010**

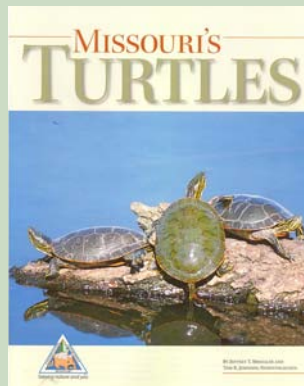
The area and trails will be open  
7:00a – 8:00p daily

**17 Wednesday 10:00 – 11:00a**

***Little Acorns: Time for Turtles***

**Ages 3 – 5**

You may be yearning for the warm sunshine of spring, and so are turtles! Come out and discover more about these reptiles. Just where have they been all winter long and when will we see them again? Please call to register.



Missouri's

**Turtles**

**Free  
leaflet**



**17 Wednesday 10:00 – 11:30a**

**Home School: How Well Do You Know Nature?**

**Ages 6 – 8, 9 – 11, or 12 – 18**

Take our nature trivia challenge and find out that there's nothing trivial about it! Test your knowledge of the where, when, what, how, and whys of nature. Questions will range from nature in your backyard to niche habitats like caves and cypress swamps. Win prizes for correct answers and find out if what you've "heard" is the real deal. Please call to register.

**19 Friday 8:30 – 10:00a**

**Birding Hike**

**Ages 10 & up** YOUNGSTERS 10-15 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

Are you eager for signs of spring? We will look for the familiar winter resident birds as they become more active. Dress for the weather so we can hike off the main trails. Please call to register.

**20 Saturday 1:00 – 2:00p**

**Wake Up! It's Spring!**

**Families with children 6 & up**

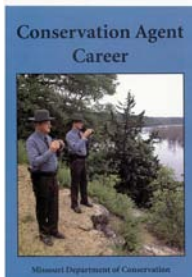
At last! It's the first day of spring! Let's search for signs of new plants and wildlife that have been hiding all winter long. Together we will discover their grand first performance of spring. Please call to register.

**23 Tuesday 10:00 – 11:00a**

**Babes in the Woods: Discovery Trail Exploration**

**Ages 0 – 36 months**

Bring your little ones for a brisk walk on our Discovery Trail. We will search for early woodland flowers or places to find them within the next couple of weeks. Please call to register.



**23 Tuesday 6:30 – 8:00p**

**Conservation Kid's Club:**

**So You Want To Be An Agent?**

**Ages 7 – 13**

Have you always wondered what it would be like to actually be an agent for the Missouri Department of Conservation? This night is for you! Join Conservation Agent Travis as you discover just what it takes to become a real agent. You won't want to miss this exciting, hands-on program. Please call to register.

**27 Saturday 10:00 – 11:00a**

**Toad-ally Awesome**

**Families with children 7 & up**

Toads are natural pest control agents. A single toad can eat hundreds of unwanted insects from your garden and lawn every year. Come out and create a personalized toad home for your back yard or garden and learn about one of our favorite amphibians. Please call to register.



**27 Saturday 11:00 – Noon**

**Rockin' & Readin' Nature Tales**

**Ages 2 & up**

Join us for a story hour as we lead you on fantastic nature adventures! We will meet birds, mammals, and all sorts of magnificent creatures! We will cross rivers, discover mysteries within the forest, and fly across the prairies. Our imaginations are the only limits. Walk-ins are welcome no registration required.

# MDC DISCOVER nature



Discover Nature  
Families programs are  
designed to help adults  
and children explore  
nature and master  
outdoor skills together.

**13 Saturday 6:00 – 7:30p**

**Woodcock Hike**

**Families with children 5 & up**

A sure sign of spring is the mysterious dance of the American Woodcock. Join a naturalist to learn about some of the incredible adaptations of this little bird. The high point of the evening will be when you venture out with your family to do a little exploring to locate the timberdoodle's dance on your own. Please call to register.

**27 Saturday 1:00 – 3:00p**

**A Hiking We Will Go!**

**Families with children 5 & up**

Hitting the trail with your kids opens up a whole new way to spend family time. Join a naturalist for a hike like you've never experienced before! With games, riddles, songs and other activities, we will teach you how to maximize the fun and learning opportunities along the trail. Bring a snack and we will eat al fresco somewhere along the trail. Please call to register.

**27 Saturday 1:00 – 4:00p**

**Passport to Adventure Kick-off**

**All ages**

Interpretive Site Coalition's Passport to Adventure Hunt is about to begin. Your ticket to an adventure exploring Kansas City's history, science, and nature is here at the kickoff event at Bass Pro in Independence, Missouri. No registration is required; walk-ins are welcome.



Join us as we feed the critters on exhibit at  
Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center on  
Wednesday and Saturday at 3p.  
The snakes will be fed every other Friday at 3p.



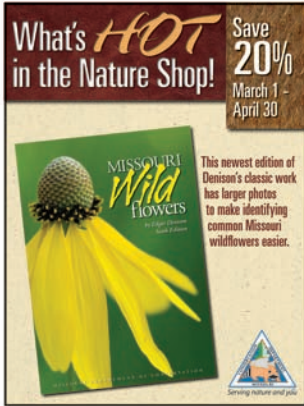
Missouri's  
**TOADS  
and  
FROGS**



**FREE Missouri Toads and Frogs**  
leaflet

Missouri's toads and frogs are colorful, harmless, vocal and valuable. Our forests, prairies, rivers, swamps, and marshes are home to a multitude of toads and frogs, but few people know how many varieties we have, how to tell them apart, or much about their natural history. This free publication helps you learn about many species native to Missouri.

# Nature Shop News



## Missouri Wildflowers guide

If you are a devotee of the state's native plants, you'll love the revised sixth edition of Missouri Wildflowers. A stunning new cover brightens Denison's classic, as well as an enlarged format, new design and improved photographs. Colored tabs also have been added to the page edges for easier location of flower color groups. Descriptions cover plant characteristics, habitat and range. No new species have been included in this edition, but the taxonomy has been updated in accordance with the most current naming conventions.

296 pages \* Revised 2008 \* Soft cover  
Heritage card discount does not apply.



## Lake City Shooting Range

28900 E Argo Road, Grain Valley, Mo 64029

816-229-4448 ~ [www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/ranges/lakecity/](http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/ranges/lakecity/)

**Hours of Operation Wednesday - Sunday Noon - 4:30p**

**6 Saturday 8:00a - Noon**

**Antler Measurement**

**27 Saturday 9:00 - 11:30a**

**Basics of Muzzleloading-Rifle**

## Kansas City's PASSPORT to Adventure

**Kick Off at Bass Pro in Independence, Mo**

**Sunday, March 27**

**1:00 ~ 4:00p**



PRSR:STD.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
JEFFERSON CITY MO  
PERMIT 274

Burr Oak Woods CNC  
The Nutshell Newsletter  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
1401 NW Park Road - Blue Springs, Mo 64015  
Serving nature and you

